

The text of the homepages of Gunnela Ivanov is edited and published here because, starting with her doctoral dissertation, it related to my own research on the role of aesthetics in computer science in terms of the concept of *design*. Her doctoral dissertation's Swedish title is *Vackrare vardagsvara – Design for alla?* meaning *Better things for everyday life – Design for everybody?* It is the idea of universal "democratic" design which is affordable by "everybody", implying a possible further free translation of the title to *Democratization of Swedish Design*. For purpose of allowing the readers' automatic translation to various languages a pre-publication version of the dissertation's raw text, as it stood while her work was still in progress, is available [here](#). For the rest, please see the links to her homepage that were given above.

Further details of the relation to my own research can be found in my article on [Computerization as design of logic acrobatics](#), which deals with what is usually called the progressive *digitalization* of society, implying challenges that are also covered in the article on [The meaning of human-computer interaction](#). These challenges require a revival of knowledge about the role of aesthetics and its late reduction to design. I thought for a long time, perhaps wrongly, that a proper ethical framing of aesthetics and its abuses would be found in [theological aesthetics](#). Up to now I have found only one relevant book for such a project: Patrick Sherry (1992) [Spirit and beauty: An introduction to theological aesthetics](#), quoted in Gunnela Ivanov's doctoral dissertation (see below) on pp. 305-306. A very difficult, convolute book that may be relevant at least for theorizing on [Virtual Reality](#) is Robert E. Wood's (1999) [Placing aesthetics: Reflections on the philosophic tradition](#). Anyway, a departing point for future research on the revival of knowledge about the role of aesthetics and its reduction to design is what I wrote in my above-mentioned paper on computerization or digitalization:

I claim that such a revival is also justified by the need for it, as it can deduced from the earlier mentioned late abuses of Kant's *Third Critique* in the present promotion of a philosophy of "design". The causes of this promotion can be read in the following comments by [Friedrich Schiller](#) in his paper *Sur les limites nécessaires dans l'usage des belles formes* [On the limits necessary in the use of beautiful forms], French translation of the German original in vol. XXI, 3 in the *Nationalausgabe* (ed. Helmut Knopmann & Benno von Wiese), and published in Friedrich Schiller, *Textes Esthétiques*, Paris: Vrin, 1998, pp.71-90, 191-193; quoted from pp. 82-83, 86f. A Swedish translation is found in Gunnela Ivanov's doctoral dissertation [dealing with what can be called *Democratization of Swedish Design*, with the Swedish title] [Better things for everyday life – Design for everybody?](#), pp. 303-305.

In lack of Schiller's German original, the original translation from German to French follows here, side by side with my further translation to English. Its understanding can be enhanced by an understanding of the discussions of Plato's pre-Christian views of the relation between the beautiful and the good as found in the *Index* ("beautiful" p. 1622) of [The Collected Dialogues](#)

*of Plato: Including Letters* (Eds. E. Hamilton & H. Cairns), possibly completed with *Wikipedia's* article on "[Form of the Good](#)". Now to Schiller:

**In French:**

"C'est donc certes au goût qu'est confiée la forme, dans la communication des connaissances, avec les restrictions que j'ai évoquées jusqu'ici mais à la condition expresse qu'il ne se mêle pas du contenu. Il ne doit jamais oublier qu'il accomplit une mission étrangère et qu'il ne conduit pas ses propres affaires. Tout son rôle doit se limiter à placer l'âme dans un ton favorable à la connaissance: mais dans tout ce qui concerne la chose elle-même il ne doit nullement prétendre à une quelconque autorité.

Si c'est ce qu'il fait - s'il accorde à la loi la suprématie, laquelle n'est autre que de contenter l'imagination et de lui procurer du plaisir dans la contemplation - s'il applique cette loi non pas simplement au *traitement* mais aussi à la chose et, conformément aux prescriptions de cette loi, n'ordonne pas seulement les matières mais aussi les choisit, non seulement il outrepassa sa mission mais la trahit et falsifie l'objet qu'il devait nous restituer fidèlement. On ne demande pas dès lors ce que les choses *sont* mais comment elles se recommandent le plus favorablement aux sens. La stricte cohérence des pensées qui aurait dû rester dissimulée, est rejetée comme une entrave encombrante, la perfection est sacrifiée à l'agréable, la vérité des parties à la beauté du tout, l'essence intime à l'expression extérieure. Or là où le contenu doit s'orienter sur la forme, il n'y a pas du tout de contenu; la présentation est vide et au lieu

**In English:**

"It is therefore certainly to taste that the form is entrusted, in the communication of knowledge, with the restrictions that I have mentioned so far, but on the express condition that it does not interfere with the content. It must never forget that it is carrying out a foreign mission and that it is not conducting its own business. Its whole role must be limited to placing the soul in a tone favorable to knowledge: but in all that concerns the thing itself it must in no way pretend to any authority.

If it does this - if it gives supremacy to a law, which is nothing else than to satisfy the imagination and to give it pleasure in contemplation - if it applies this law not only to the treatment but also to the thing and, in accordance with the prescriptions of this law, does not only order the matters but also chooses them, it not only oversteps his mission but also betrays it and falsifies the object which it was supposed to restore faithfully to us. One does not ask then what things are but how they recommend themselves most favorably to the senses. The strict coherence of the thoughts which should have remained dissimulated, is rejected like a cumbersome obstacle, the perfection is sacrificed to the pleasant one, the truth of the parts to the beauty of the whole, the intimate essence to the external expression. Now where content must be oriented to form, there is no content at all; the

d'avoir augmenté son savoir, on s'est contenté de se livrer à un jeu distrayant.

Les écrivains qui possèdent plus d'ingéniosité que d'entendement et plus de goût que de Science ne se rendent que trop souvent coupables de cette supercherie, et les lecteurs qui sont plus habitués à ressentir qu'à penser ne se montrent que trop enclins à leur pardonner. D'une manière générale, c'est une pratique douteuse de donner au goût sa formation achevée avant qu'on ait exercé l'entendement en tant que faculté de penser et enrichi la tête de concepts. Car, puisque le goût ne considère constamment que le traitement et non la chose, toute différence objective dans les choses se perd là il est l'unique juge. On devient indifférent à la réalité et ne s'attache finalement qu'à la forme et au phénomène.

De là l'esprit de superficialité et de frivolité que l'on aperçoit très souvent dans les états et les cercles qui se vantent par ailleurs, non sans raison, du plus haut raffinement.

[...]

Tant que l'homme est encore un sauvage, que ses pulsions tendent simplement vers des objets matériels et qu'un égoïsme de la plus grossière espèce conduit ses actions, la sensibilité ne peut être dangereuse pour la moralité que par sa *force aveugle* et résister aux prescriptions de la raison qu'en tant que puissance, [...]

Mais s'il troque cet état naturel sauvage contre l'état du raffinement, si le goût anoblit ses pulsions, s'il assigne à celles-ci des objets plus dignes dans le

presentation is empty, and instead of having increased one's knowledge, one has merely indulged in an entertaining game.

Writers who possess more ingenuity than understanding and more taste than Science are only too often guilty of this deception, and readers who are more accustomed to feeling than thinking are only too willing to forgive them. Generally speaking, it is a dubious practice to give taste its completed formation before one has exercised the understanding as a thinking faculty and enriched the head with concepts. Because, since the taste constantly considers only the treatment and not the thing, all objective difference in things is lost there it is the only judge. One becomes indifferent to the reality and is finally attached only to the form and the phenomenon.

Hence the spirit of superficiality and frivolity that one very often sees in states and circles that otherwise boast, not without reason, of the highest refinement.

[...]

As long as man is still a savage, as long as his impulses tend simply towards material objects and as long as an egoism of the crudest kind leads his actions, sensibility can only be dangerous for morality by its blind force and resist the prescriptions of reason as a power, [...].

But if he exchanges this wild natural state for the state of refinement, if taste ennobles his impulses, if he assigns to them more worthy objects in the moral world, if he tempers their brutal

monde moral, s'il tempère leurs brutales explosions par la règle de la beauté, il peut arriver que ces mêmes pulsions, qui auparavant n'étaient terribles *par leur violence aveugle*, deviennent par une apparence de *dignité* et une *prétendue autorité* du caractère bien plus dangereuses encore et exercent sous masque de l'innocence, de la noblesse et de la pureté, une tyrannie bien plus grave sur la volonté.

L'homme de goût se soustrait volontairement au joug grossier de l'instinct. Il assujettit à la raison sa tendance au plaisir et s'entend à faire déterminer les objets de ses désirs par l'esprit pensant. Or plus se renouvelle le cas où le jugement moral et le jugement esthétique, le sentiment moral et le sentiment de la beauté coïncident dans le même objet et se rencontrent dans la même sentence, et plus la raison incline à tenir une pulsion qui est si *spiritualisée* pour l'une des *siennes* et à lui confier finalement le gouvernail de la volonté, assorti des pleins pouvoirs sans aucune limite. [...]"

explosions by the rule of beauty, it may happen that these same impulses, which before were only terrible by their blind violence, become by an appearance of dignity and a pretended authority of the character much more dangerous still and exert under mask of the innocence, the nobility and the purity, a tyranny much more serious on the will.

The man of taste voluntarily subtracts himself from the coarse yoke of instinct. He subdues his tendency to pleasure to reason and intends to have the objects of his desires determined by the thinking mind. Now the more the case is renewed where the moral judgment and the aesthetic judgment, the moral feeling and the feeling of beauty coincide in the same object and meet in the same sentence, the more reason inclines to hold an impulse which is so spiritualized for one of its own and to entrust to it finally the rudder of the will, with full powers without any limit. [...]"